



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE



CLUE
SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF EASTER

BIG IDEA

Every Easter, we worship Jesus.

THE BIBLE

The Triumphal Entry: Matthew 21:1-11
(Zechariah 9:9; 2 Kings 9:13; Psalm 118:25-26)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **OBJECT LESSON** | Detective Notebook
- **ACTIVITY** | Palm Leaf Scavenger Hunt
- **ACTIVITY** | Donkey, Baby, Backpack
- **QUESTION** | Have you ever gone on a trip?
- **ACTIVITY** | Clue Cards
- **BIBLE STORY** | Matthew 21:1-11
- **BIBLE STORY** | Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:25
- **THE BIG IDEA** | Every Easter, we worship Jesus.
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Hidden Messages
- **ACTIVITY** | Freeze Dance
- **SCRIPTURE** | 2 Kings 9:13; Psalm 118:25-26; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:7-9
- **ACTIVITY** | Palm Relay
- **MUSIC** | Worship Time
- **PRAYER** | Palm Prayers
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Joshua 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:31

SMALL GROUP TIME

- **DISCUSSION**
 - What animal did Jesus ride?
 - What were people waving as Jesus rode past?
 - What does Hosanna mean?
 - How do you think the people in the crowd felt as they watched Jesus ride past?
 - What does it mean that Jesus was the Messiah?
 - How can you praise Jesus this week?
- **ACTIVITY** | **Palm Praises**
- **MEMORY VERSES** | **Joshua 1:9;**
1 Corinthians 10:31



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



CLUE
SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF EASTER

BIG IDEA

Every Easter, we worship Jesus.

THE BIBLE

The Triumphal Entry: Matthew 21:1-11
(Zechariah 9:9; 2 Kings 9:13; Psalm 118:25-26)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

OBJECT LESSON | Detective Notebooks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you'd like, give every kid a small notebook where they can write or draw the clues they collect.*

ACTIVITY | Palm Leaf Scavenger Hunt

- Welcome to church today! Did you know it's almost Easter?
- Easter is a really important holiday, but why? **This month we're going to follow the clues to solve the mystery of why Easter is so important.**
- Since we're solving a mystery, I need you to be detectives and try to guess what our Bible story is about today. To figure it out, you're going to need to find some clues by searching through the Bible or asking each other for help.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print the Palm Leaf Scavenger Hunt printable from your Week 1 folder and cut out each clue. (If you're making several sets for different groups, color-code them by printing each team's clues on a different color paper, then give each team an envelope for collecting their clues.) Hide the clues around the room and let the kids know that, when they find a clue, they must write their answer on the clue card and hold onto it as they race to collect and answer all ten clues.*
- **Now that you've collected all the clues, what do you think our Bible story is going to be about today?**

- Our Bible story today is the very beginning of the Easter story. In this story, we'll learn about a time that Jesus rode on a donkey into a city called Jerusalem. This story is important because it happened just one week before Jesus died on a cross, which is a really important part of the Easter story.
- This month, we're going to look at some clues (like detectives) to help us unlock the mystery of why this story from so long ago is important to our lives today.

ACTIVITY | Donkey, Baby, Backpack

- To solve a mystery, detectives sometimes go undercover and pretend they're something they're not. Let's play a game where you have to pretend to be different things.
- One of the things you'll pretend to be is a clue about our Bible story today, so pay attention and see if you can guess what it is!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This game is a spin-off of the popular game "Bronco, Baby, Backpack." Tell each kid to choose a partner, then form two circles, with one circle inside the other and one person from each pair in each circle, facing each other. When you say, "Go", the two circles of kids will walk in opposite directions until you yell out a command: donkey, baby, or backpack. When you yell a command, the partners must run to each other and complete the action for that command. The last pair to get in position each round is out. Keep playing until you have a winner. Here are the actions for each command:*
 - **Donkey:** One partner gets on all fours while the other sits (or pretends to sit) side-saddle on their back).
 - **Baby:** One partner holds (or pretends to hold) the other like a baby.
 - **Backpack:** One partner jumps on the other person's back like they're getting a piggyback ride.
- **Did anyone spot the clue for today's story in the game we just played?** It was the donkey!
- In our Bible story today, Jesus rides a donkey through a crowd of people, kind of like he was in a parade.
- **If a famous person came to our town in a big parade, what would you expect them to be riding on?** Would it be in a fancy car or a kid's bicycle? Would it be on a big float or being pushed in a dirty old shopping cart?
- **If a big celebrity rode into our town on a kid's bicycle or in an old shopping cart, what would you think?** You would probably be surprised. That's how people probably felt when they saw Jesus riding on a donkey! But we'll talk more about that in a minute.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *See your weekly instructions for adaptations to help your kids with special needs enjoy this game.*

QUESTION | Have you ever gone on a trip?

- **Have you ever traveled to another city to stay for a few days?**
- **Where did you go?**
- **How did you get there?**
- When we go on trips, we go in cars, or trains, or maybe even airplanes. But in Jesus' day, He didn't have a car, plane, or train. Instead, He rode a donkey to a city called Jerusalem.
- What was Jesus doing in Jerusalem? You're the detectives! Let's see if we can figure it out.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

ACTIVITY | Clue Cards

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a manila envelope with a "Top Secret" sticker on it and an instruction sheet from your Week 1 folder. Each week, you'll give kids three clue cards to take home that will be pieces of a Clue game they can play with their families. Each week, tell them to put their cards in their envelope and save them. At the end of the month, they can use all the cards to play the game: *Clue: Solving the Mystery of Easter*. For Week 1, give them these three cards: *Jesus, the Streets of Jerusalem, and the Palm Branch*.
- Our series this month is about solving the mystery of Easter. To help you solve the mystery, you're going to get your own Clue card game to play at home!
- You'll get three cards each week: one person, one place, and one object. At the end of this month, you'll have all the cards you need to make a game called **Clue: The Mystery of Easter**. Make sure you don't lose them!
- **What do you think today's clue cards have in common?**
- **What do you think they have to do with the story of Easter?**

BIBLE STORY | Matthew 21:2–11

- So we have some clues about the mystery of Easter, but how do they all fit together? What makes Holy Week so important?
- Oh, wait! I didn't tell you about Holy Week yet! **Has anyone ever heard of Holy Week before? Do you know what it is?**
- Holy Week is the week leading up to Easter Sunday, which is coming up really soon. We celebrate Holy Week because there were a lot of important things that happened during that week — and they're all clues that are going to help us solve the mystery of Easter.
- Let's take a look at today's story, which takes place on the first day of Holy Week and gives us one really important clue about why Easter is so important to us today.
- **FOR PRETEENS:** Let your preteens write down clues on a white board during the Bible story.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the story in your Bible and encourage kids to do the same. Read it!
- **What clues did you get from this story about the true meaning of Easter?**
- In this story, we hear two other passages of Scripture being quoted. I think they're clues!

BIBLE STORY | Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:25

- The first passage of Scripture we heard quoted was a prophecy from the Old Testament of the Bible. A prophecy is a prediction for the future from God. Let's do some detective work and find this clue from 500 years before Jesus walked the earth.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up and read Zechariah 9:9.
- **How does this verse say the king will come into Jerusalem?** It says the King will enter Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- **Is that what happened in the Bible story we just read about Jesus?** Yes!
- Now let's look at another clue. **What word did the people shout as Jesus was riding past?**

- **What do you think Hosanna means?** Hosanna means, “God save us.” To learn more about this clue, let’s read it from the Old Testament.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up and read Psalm 118:25-26.*
- The people in this story were quoting Psalm 118:25-26. Hosanna means “Lord, save us!” It was a phrase of praise and celebration.
- **Why do you think they were celebrating?** They knew that Jesus was the one they’d been waiting for, the Messiah. They were celebrating the coming of Jesus, their king and ours!
- Have you put the clues together yet? Do you know what this story tells about Easter and why it’s so special? Here’s the answer . . .

THE BIG IDEA | Every Easter, we worship Jesus.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Each week, do a big reveal (and make it fun) when you announce the Big Idea, like:*
 - *Ask the kids to give you a drum-roll by stomping their feet or patting their laps.*
 - *Shout the Big Idea, then point to the kids and have them shout it back. (Change it up by using funny voices, different volumes, or inflections.)*
 - *Have a character (either recurring or rotating) come out every week to reveal the Big Idea.*
 - *Write it on a piece of paper and hide it somewhere in the room. Have the kids go on a “hunt” for it. When it’s found, ask someone to come up and read it.*
- This week’s Big Idea: **Every Easter, we worship Jesus.**

OBJECT LESSON | Hidden Messages

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your service, use a black light marker to write this phrase on a piece of white paper: “Jesus is the Messiah.” If you’d like to do this activity in groups, make enough for each group of kids to have a sheet of paper or write one word on each piece of paper and give one to each group. Set out a regular flash light, a black light flashlight, and a pair of sunglasses. You can do this activity up front or have each group do it on their own. As you teach, call at least one kid to the front and let them choose an item to help them read the message. If the first person gets it wrong, let your kids vote on the next tool to use. When they shine the black light flashlight on the paper, the message will appear.*
- There’s another clue written on this paper that will help us solve the mystery of Easter. **Who can come up and read it?**
- **Can you see anything on the paper just by looking at it?** No, because it’s an invisible message!
- You can’t see anything right now, but you can choose one item from the detective’s toolkit to help you find the hidden message. Let’s keep trying tools until we can read the message.
- **What does the secret message say?** It says, “Jesus is the Messiah.”
- **Does anyone know what the word Messiah means?** Messiah was a word that all the people in those days were familiar with. It means, “the promised Savior who would deliver and save God’s people from sin.”
- They people who saw Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey had been waiting for a long time for their Savior, the Messiah. Like we learned a few minutes ago, there were lots of clues, or prophecies, in the Old Testament about what the Messiah would be like and how He would come.
- Jesus fulfilled every one of these prophecies, which means He was the promised Messiah.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

ACTIVITY | Freeze Dance

- The people in the Bible story knew that Jesus was the one they had been waiting for, the Messiah. That's why they were praising Him and laying down their coats and waving the palm branches!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give the kids streamers, party horns, pom-pom shakers, or anything they can use to make noise and celebrate. Play some music and let them make noise and dance.*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *Let preteens make this into a competition. See your weekly instructions for details.*
- Let's have a praise parade of our own. When the music is playing, dance and shout "Hosanna!" and wave your streamers. When the music stops, freeze!
- Jesus wasn't just the Messiah for the people in the Bible story. He came to be the Savior for all of us. We can praise Him and thank Him every day!
- During the very first Holy Week, people worshiped Jesus. That's why we continue to worship Jesus every Holy Week, even thousands of years later. **Every Easter, we worship Jesus.**

SCRIPTURE | 2 Kings 9:13; Psalm 118:25-26; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:7-9

- We've learned that God put clues about Jesus into the Old Testament of the Bible, hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Let's make something together that will show us where these clues are.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print the Clue Matching printable or write the Scriptures on pieces of paper. Cut three long pieces of yarn long enough to span your room from one side to the other. Split your kids into three groups and assign each group to one of the Old Testament clues. Give them a piece of string and a Bible. Have three kids hold up the Old Testament clues on one side of the room (2 Kings 9:13; Psalm 118:25-26; Zechariah 9:9) and three kids hold up the New Testament clues on the other side of the room (Matthew 21:9; Matthew 21:7; Matthew 21:8) and have them spread out. The other kids will look up the verses (or you can print them on cards for them) and try to match the Old Testament verses to the New Testament verses using string. They will send one person to hold one end of the string at the Old Testament verse and another will hold the other end at the New Testament verse.*
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *See your weekly instructions to get details for making pictures to help your kids with special needs do this activity.*
- These strings connect the Old Testament promises to their fulfillment in the New Testament. This reminds us that even though the Bible is a huge book with 66 different parts, it's all one big story that is connected.
- From start to finish, the Bible is a story about God sending a Savior to save His people from their sin. That's what Jesus did for us, and that's why we worship Him every day — but especially at Easter.

ACTIVITY | Palm Relay

- Like the crowd of people in today's story laid down a path for Jesus to enter Jerusalem, we're going to make our own path with pretend palm leaves.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a piece of green paper. Set some cones on one side of the room for a starting line and the other side of the room for a finish line. Split the kids into teams of 5-10 and line them up at the starting line. Tell them to run down to the finish line and lay down their green paper, then run back and tag the next person in line, who will lay down another sheet of paper to make a line that goes back toward the starting line. They will keep laying down pieces one by one, until the line stretches all the way from the finish line to the starting line. The first team to get their palm leaves all the way from the finish line to the starting line wins.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Let your kids with special needs hop on their own palm leaf in a separate space if they get overwhelmed by this game.
- **Why do you think the people laid down their coats and palm branches on the path where Jesus was riding?** It was a way to show respect for Jesus, to prepare the path for Him and acknowledge that He was the Messiah.
- **If you were there, how would you have felt watching Jesus ride past on a donkey?**

MUSIC | Worship Time

- Jesus may not be here right now riding a donkey, but we can still worship Him!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can sing any songs you'd like, but for this lesson we like, "Hosanna Rock," by Yancy and "Mighty to Save," by Hillsong Kids.
- When you're worshipping today, imagine you are with the crowd of people praising and worshipping Jesus as He rode past on a donkey to enter Jerusalem for Passover. They praised Him because they knew He was the Savior and they were so excited He had finally come. We can praise Him for the same reason today!

PRAYER | Palm Prayers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Instead of using palm branches for this prayer, encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with their palms facing upward.
- The people in the Bible story used palm leaves to praise Jesus. Let's give Him praise by lifting our palms of our hands toward heaven. This is an action to show God that we are lifting up our hearts and our thankfulness to Him.
- Think of three specific reasons you can praise God. Let's tell him how thankful we are together.
- Dear God, we thank you for sending Jesus to be our Savior and take the punishment for our sins. We thank you for planning this out with us in mind because You love us. We thank you that we can worship together today. In Jesus' name, amen.

MEMORY VERSES | Joshua 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:31

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every kid memory verse magnets or stickers. Then work on the memory verse together. For ideas on how to do this well, check out the Memory Verse Guide in your Programming folder and give them to your small group leaders, if you'd like.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **What animal did Jesus ride?** (*A donkey.*)
- **What were people waving as Jesus rode past?** (*Palm branches.*)
- **What does Hosanna mean?** (*God save us.*)
- **How do you think the people in the crowd felt as they watched Jesus ride past?**
- **What does it mean that Jesus was the Messiah?**
- **How can you praise Jesus this week?**

ACTIVITY | Palm Praises

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print the Palm Praises printable (from your Week 1 folder) on green cardstock and give them to the kids. Give them green tissue paper, glue, green glitter, markers and crayons, and scissors. Let them decorate their palm branches and cut out the palm leaves. When they finish, they can wave their palm branches and shout their own phrase of praise to Jesus.*

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